

W. A. D. G. S. M. K. E. P. J. 2004

DRAUDER 29

Archit. 1900-1910

71. 2009.085. 04662

Curios and Relics
Architectural Features
Window Glass
Marked by Booth

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Wilkes Booth's Message Scratched on Glass.

On August 13, 1864, John Wilkes Booth was playing a dramatic engagement in Meadville, Pennsylvania. Upon his arrival in the city that day, he registered at the McHenry house, then kept by a Mr. R. M. U. Taylor, and after the performance in the evening retired alone to his room. When the servants entered his room the next morning, after Booth had left the hotel and city, an inscription was discovered scratched in a large hand on one of the window panes: "Abe Lincoln departed this life August 13, 1864, by the effects of poison." Little attention was paid to the writing on the glass at the time; but as soon as it was learned that Booth had killed the president, the circumstances connected with the window inscription were recalled, the glass was removed from its sash, framed in a plain black wooden frame, a piece of dark velvet being placed at its back to facilitate reading, and the signature of Booth entered on the register on August 13, was cut from the book and attached to the window glass. The original pane is now in the possession of the war department, to which it was presented by the daughter of the owner of the hotel, Miss Mary McHenry, some time after the assassination of the president. All of the circumstances in connection with the glass are certified to by Miss McHenry and other residents of Meadville.—"Four Lincoln Conspirators," by Victor Louis Mason, in the April Century.

1855

An Historic Pane of Glass.

There are several interesting mementoes of Lincoln and Booth kept in a small case in the rooms of the Judge Advocate General at Washington, D. C. Among these the most interesting is a common pane of window glass. In August, 1864, the country was startled with the announcement that President Lincoln had been poisoned. On that day Booth was a guest at the McHenry House at Meadville, Pa. With the diamond of his ring he scratched the following on one of the glasses of his room window:

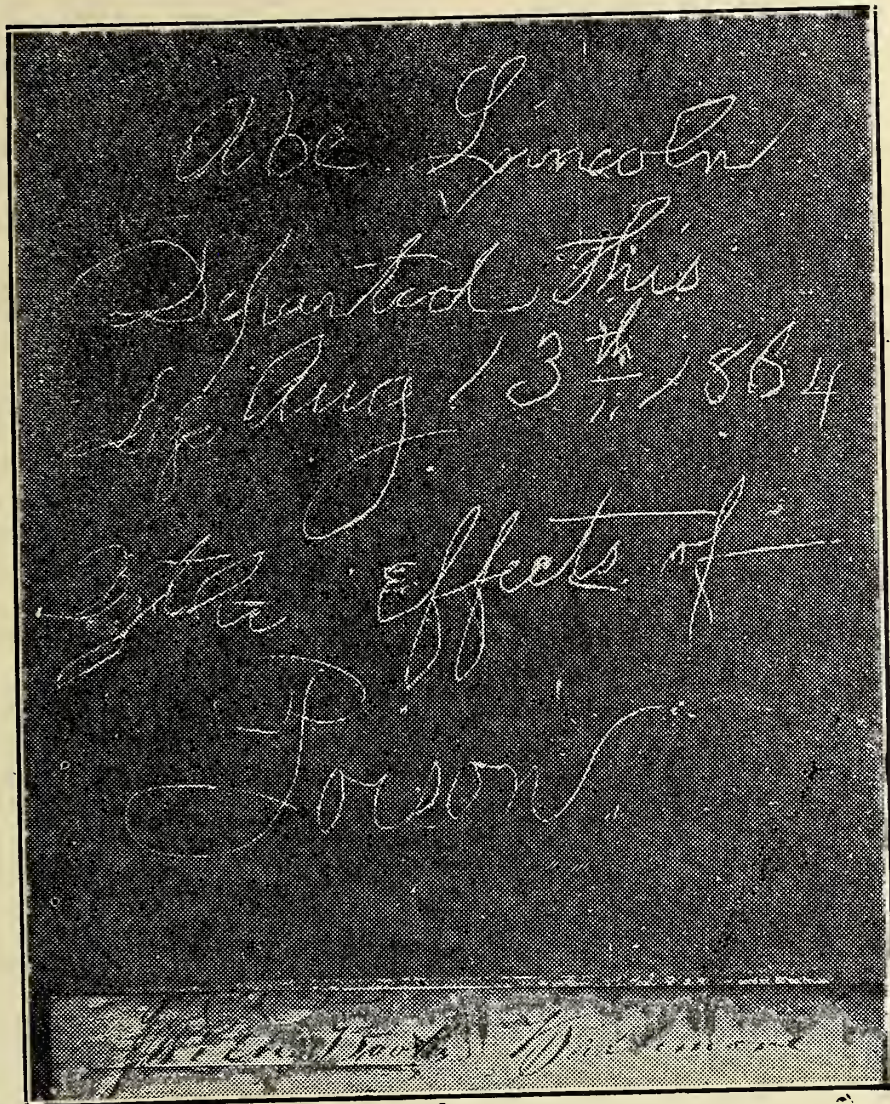
ABE LINCOLN

Departed this life Aug. 13, 1864

By the effect of poison.

After the great tragedy of April 14, 1865, Miss McHenry removed the pane and sent it to be preserved in the collection of relics mentioned.

1855



Evidence that John Wilkes Booth had long planned the assassination of President Lincoln came from a Meadville source when the window pane of his McHenry House room was found to bear the above scrawl, scratched in the pane with a diamond the actor habitually wore. After the President's death the pane was sent to Miss Mary McHenry, daughter of the man for whom the hotel was named, together with Booth's signature from the register.

In 1879 Miss McHenry presented the relic to the judge-advocate's office in Washington where it may be seen today. The picture was secured through the Washington Bureau of the Associated Press of which the Tribune-Republican is a member. It is believed that this is the first half-tone reproduction ever to be made of this interesting piece of evidence. Story Section G, page 14.

From Thos M. Galey Owensboro Ky

Abc Lincoln
Departed this
Morn Aug 13th 1864
After effects of
Linn

Wm. L. Booth Baltimore

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